DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 243 RC 023 397

AUTHOR BlueArm, Marion
TITLE Assessing Lakota Language Teaching Issues on the Cheyenne River Reservation.
PUB DATE 2002-00-00
NOTE 17p.; In: Indigenous Languages across the Community. Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Stabilizing Indigenous Languages (7th, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, May 11-14, 2000); see RC 023 385.
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/ILAC/.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Education; *Bilingual Education; Community Attitudes; Community Surveys; *Immersion Programs; *Lakota; *Language Attitudes; *Language Maintenance; Native Language Instruction; Reservation American Indians
IDENTIFIERS *Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation SD; Endangered Languages

ABSTRACT

A study examined community attitudes concerning Lakota language instruction in the schools on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. Surveys were completed by 88 Native American, Caucasian, and mixed-heritage households. Results indicated agreement with the establishment of intensified Lakota language education for all school levels on the reservation. The majority of respondents who agreed with expanded Lakota language education were 40-50 years old--the age group that holds most decision-making positions within the tribal government. Respondents indicated a slight preference for bilingual education over immersion programs. Research suggests that immersion classrooms result in the quickest and most complete language learning in young children. Therefore, it is suggested that residents be informed of these findings to ensure increasing support for immersion programs. As the second choice, immersion still received enough positive responses to make a pilot project in Head Start and the lower elementary level a likely success. Re-vernacularizing Lakota will require tremendous effort by every community member in addition to implementing immersion programs in schools. English should be inaccessible in certain contexts. Ideally, there should be whole buildings and events where only Lakota is spoken. People should voluntarily ban television and other forms of modern media from their homes, at least for certain hours or contexts. Other language maintenance strategies are suggested. An appendix presents the survey. (TD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jon Reyhner

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

ED 462 243

Assessing Lakota Language Teaching Issues on the Cheyenne River Reservation

Marion BlueArm

Currently, the Lakota language in South Dakota is facing a process of attrition similar to that affecting many Native languages in the world. Lakotas about 40 years or older still tend to be fluent speakers, while the younger generations can, typically, understand the language but not speak it fluently. Many children can barely understand Lakota, and they tend not to speak it because it is not "cool." Lakota is being replaced by English, the language of multi-media and modern life.

Joshua Fishman (1991, 1996a, 1996b), an expert on language revitalization, argues that any language decline can only be reversed if the language re-emerges in its Native communities as the mother tongue. Surviving speakers need to discipline themselves so that they converse with their children exclusively in the language, which will allow children once again to acquire the language largely unconsciously and automatically. Speakers have to aim to conduct all daily communication in the home in the language.

In the formal education system, children should be immersed in the target language as early as possible. This notion is supported by research, which suggests that spontaneous language acquisition usually stops around the age of puberty. In later years, students require increasingly analytical instruction based on grammar. Language learning then becomes a highly conscious effort (Saville-Troike, 1981).

Some Demographic Information

The Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation is located in north central South Dakota and covers around 2,900,000 acres—about the size of Connecticut. About 1,401,000 of these acres are tribal land or acres of tribal trust land. It takes two to three hours by car to travel from the east end of the reservation to the west end or from north to south. The total Indian population of 12,861 people (1990 census) consists mainly of members of four bands of Teton Lakota: the Minneconju (or Hohwoju), the Sihasapa (Blackfoot), Oohenupa (Two Kettle), and the Itazipco (Without Bows). Tribal headquarters is at the centrally located town of Eagle Butte. There are 13 voting precincts, encompassing 25 communities.[1] Typically, the more outlying the communities, the more tradition and language they retain. Communities include: White Horse, La Plant, and Swift Bird on the east end; Thunder Butte and Iron Lightning in the central area; Timber Lake and Isabel in the north; and Red Scaffold, Cherry Creek, and Bridger in the south west.

The Research

In the spring of 1999, I conducted a survey to assess the ideas, feelings, and attitudes of community members on the reservation concerning language issues (see Appendix for survey). I chose Eagle Butte, Bridger, and Red Scaffold as the target areas. The purpose of the study was to obtain data for the possible

RC023397

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

establishment of a Lakota immersion program in Head Start and the early elementary grades. In preliminary interviews, interest had been expressed by school administrators to pilot such a program at the Head Start Centre and the Cheyenne Eagle Butte School if community desire was high and outside funding could be secured.

Residents of three communities, comprised of Native American households, non-Native American households (primarily Caucasian), and households with people of mixed heritage, were surveyed in order to evaluate their beliefs concerning Lakota language instruction in the school system, pre-school through grade 12. Four survey items were demographic, assessing gender, age-range, ethnic household composition, and age-ranges of children. Survey items one to seven were responded to on a Likert scale, with the choices *strongly agree*, *agree*, *undecided*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. Items 12-16 were multiple choice questions. Respondents were asked to choose the answer most true to their believes or circumstances. Items 17 and 18 were open-ended opinion questions that were answered in short narrative form.

One hundred fifty surveys were hand delivered to random households, and 88 were returned, which equals a 59% return rate. Table 1 on the following page summarizes return statistics.

Around 20% of all children of respondents were of early elementary age, upper elementary age, and middle/high school age respectively. Over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with issues that support language preservation efforts. They believed that children should learn to understand, speak, read, and write their Native Lakota language, that there should be bilingual education or immersion at all school levels, and that Lakota should return as an everyday spoken language. Eighty percent said they would enrol their child in an immersion classroom, while only 4% thought they would not. More than three-fourths of all respondents felt that a Lakota who can speak the Native language has more of a cultural identity than a Lakota who cannot. Yet about half of the respondents reported teaching little or no Lakota to their children at the present time, and only 16% answered "completely" or "a lot." These results strongly suggest the need for a Lakota language program on Cheyenne River to keep the language alive.

To assess whether a positive relationship could be established between gender, household composition, age of respondent, and age group of respondents' children and the respondents' answer choices for each item, each survey item was examined in more detail. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate survey results for items 1 through 16.

Items 12 through 16 requested an opinion of respondents pertaining to the intensity of Lakota instruction in the schools. An obvious preference for bilingual education over all other methods remained the same for items 15 and 16.

It can be noted that more than half of all lower and upper elementary children would benefit from a bilingual classroom setting. Together, these are 35 students or 54% of the total 65 children in these age groups. If an immersion program could be combined with a partial immersion program, a total of 24 additional

Table 1. Summary of return statistics.

Community	No. of Surveys Sent	No. Returned	Percent Returned
Red Scaffold	10	5	50%
Cherry Creek	40	22	55%
Eagle Butte	100	61	61%
TOTAL	150	88	59%
Demographics:			
Age of Respondents	No. of Respondents		Percent of Total
Younger than 20	4		5%
20-30	25		28%
30-40	28		32%
40-50	20		23%
50-60	7		8%
60-70	3		3%
Older than 70	1		1%
TOTAL	88		100%
Household Composition	No. of Respondents		Percent of Total
Lakota	41		46%
Mixed	43		49%
Other	4		5%
TOTAL	88		100%
Gender	No. of Respondents		Percent of Total
Male	32		36%
Female	56		64%
TOTAL	88		100%
Ages of Children	No. of Respondents		Percent of Total
3-5	36		22%
6-9	32		20%
10-12	33		21%
13-17	37		23%
None	23		14%
TOTAL	88		100%

students in both age groups would benefit: 13 in the younger group and 11 in the upper elementary level.

Demographic Information on Respondents

It remains to be examined whether differences can be noted when responses are compared according to gender, household composition, the ages of

participants, and the ages of their children. Only the agree (strongly agree and agree) and other positive or confirming answers were juxtaposed in this analysis.

For items 12 through 16, I chose the categories that showed the highest percentage of total responses. For example, in item 12, most participants felt that immersion should continue one to five years or at age six through nine; in item 13, most respondents thought that immersion should begin at the age of three to five

Gender of respondents: No significant discrepancy between males and females could be found.

Ages of respondents: Although most respondents were 30 to 40 years old, percentage-wise, most agreement answers were given by those 40 to 50 years old for items 1 through 11. This suggests a high interest in the maintenance of the Lakota language in this age group, which represents the last generation of mostly fluent speakers.

For items 12-16, the overall percentage rate of agreement answers dropped to include the younger age groups; however, in items 14-16, those who defended immersion instruction in each school level (elementary through high school) were again 40 to 50 years old. On the other hand, those respondents who felt that bilingual education would serve children best at all three school levels were 20 to 30 years old. This result suggests that the younger age group values the importance of instruction in English alongside Native language education.

Household composition: No significant differences were found for household composition concerning items 1 through 7 and 12 through 16. For survey items 8 through 11, however, the majority of those who answered *completely* or *a lot* were from Lakota households. Likewise, a higher percentage of Lakota household members than respondents from mixed households chose immersion instruction for questions 14 to 16.

Ages of children in the household: In survey items 1 through 7, people who have children in the age groups 6 through 12 responded with the highest percentage of *strongly agree* or *agree*. This corresponds to the elementary and middle school level. All parents agreed, with at least 81%, to each of these survey items (1 through 7).

Items 8 through 11 received the highest percentage rate for *completely* or *a lot* from parents of 10 to 12-year-old upper elementary school students. For items 12 through 16, no relationship could be established between ages of children in the household and survey responses by their caregivers. Percentages were very similar from one item to another and across the age groups of children.

Items 17 and 18 consisted of open-ended narrative questions, designed to allow respondents to formulate their answers more critically and creatively. Responses to these questions were listed and then organized under several subheadings or subjects. For example, for survey question 17, "Would you teach Lakota to your child to support language teaching efforts by the school(s)," five participants wrote statements that I sub-categorized under the heading *save language*.

Items 17 and 18 were analyzed according to gender of the respondent, age, and household composition, again, to determine if any of these factors compared favourably to the response or type of response. The relationship between ages of children and responses was not examined.

Question 17

Below is a chart mapping the frequency distribution of choices for survey item 17 in diminishing order:

"I would teach Lakota to my child at home to support language teaching efforts by the schools because":

Language equals culture	21 responses
No content (just yes)	13 responses
It's important to teach language	10 responses
If I can (adult language ability)	7 responses
Because home best for teaching/learning language	6 responses
To learn the language and understand	6 responses
No, or not able to answer	6 responses
To save language	5 responses
No response	5 responses
Other (does not fit into any of the other categories)	4 responses
To understand/communicate with elderly	3 responses
Would be willing to, but can not	3 responses

Five people did not respond to item 17, which means that 77 participants (88%) are at least willing to teach the language at home. The majority of these, 24%, believed it is important to save the Lakota language in order to preserve the culture. Twenty-five percent of the male participants answered under this category and 23% of the females; 27% were from Lakota households, and 21% were from mixed households. The majority of respondents were 30 to 40 years old.

Also, responses indicated that at least 10 participants (11% under subheadings 3 and 12) would teach the language if they could, which further suggests a need for Lakota instruction. Ten additional respondents (8%) considered learning Lakota important without offering further explanations, and at least five respondents (6%) felt that they would teach Lakota at home because the language needs to be preserved or saved.

Gender of respondents: No relationship could be determined between the gender of respondents and their answer choices for item 17. Yet it should be noted that only females gave responses that were assigned to categories four (elderly), five (to learn/ understand), eight (willing but not able), and nine (other). Responses by females matched all categories.

Household composition: As for gender, no consistent pattern was noted between household composition and survey responses. Six of the categories received most responses from members of Lakota households, and the six remaining categories received the most answers from respondents living in mixed

Table 2. Survey Results for Questions 1-16 by Gender and Heritage

#	Item or Question	Answer Choices	Total Whole Numbers	Male	Female	Lakota	Mixed	Other
1	Children should learn to speak and understand Lakota	Agree Disagree	84=99% 0	31=97% 0	53=95% 0	40=97% 0	40=92% 0	4=100% 0
2	Children should learn to read and write Lakota	Agree Disagree	79=90% 0	29=91% 0	50=89% 0	38=93% 0	37=86% 0	4=100% 0
3	If there was an immersion classroom, I would enroll my child	Agree Disagree	70=80% 4=4%	27=84% 0	43=77% 4=4%	33=88% 2=4%	33=77% 2=5%	1=25% 0
4	There should be a Lakota Immersion Head Start group	Agree Disagree	77=88% 3=3%	28=88% 0	49=87% 3=6%	36=87% 2=6%	39=91% 1=4%	2=50% 0
5	There should be Lakota Immersion in the elementary schools	Agree Disagree	75=85% 5=6%	29=91% 0	46=82% 5=9%	37=90% 2=5%	36=84% 3=7%	2=50% 0
6	I wish Lakota came back as an everyday spoken language	Agree Disagree	78=89% 6=7%	28=87% 1=3%	50=89% 5=9%	37=90% 3=7%	39=91% 3=7%	2=50% 0
7	A Lakota speaking Lakota has more of a cultural identity	Agree Disagree	72=82% 12=14%	27=84% 4=13%	45=80% 8=14%	32=78% 6=15%	36=84% 6=14%	4=100% 0
8	I am Teaching Lakota to my children at home	Yes* No*	14=16% 24=27%	5=16% 8=25%	9=16% 16=28%	9=22% 7=17%	4=9% 15=35%	1=25% 2=50%
9	I can understand Lakota	Yes No	42=47% 11=13%	20=63% 4=12%	22=39% 7=13%	26=63% 2=5%	15=35% 7=16%	1=25% 2=50%
10	I can speak Lakota	Yes No	36=41% 22=25%	19=60% 5=16%	17=30% 17=30%	22=54% 7=17%	13=30% 12=28%	1=25% 3=75%
11	I can read and write Lakota	Yes No	24=27% 28=32%	11=34% 6=19%	13=23% 22=39%	14=34% 8=19%	10=24% 17=39%	0 3=75%
12	If, how many years should immersion continue?	None 1-12 Years 13 Years to Life	7=8% 59=67% 22=25%	2=6% 21=66% 9=28%	5=9% 38=68% 13=23%	3=7% 28=69% 10=24%	3=7% 29=67% 11=26%	1=25% 2=50% 1=25%
13	At what age should immersion begin?	None Birth to 5 6 +	5=6% 79=90% 4=4%	1=3% 30=94% 1=3%	4=7% 49=87% 3=6%	2=5% 37=91% 2=4%	2=5% 39=90% 2=5%	1=25% 3=75% 0
14	How much Lakota, if any, should be taught in Head Start?	Immersion Bilingual None	37=42% 46=52% 1=1%	14=44% 16=50% 0	23=41% 30=53% 1=2%	19=46% 19=46% 0	18=42% 23=54% 1=2%	0 4=100% 0
15	How should Lakota be taught in the elementary school(s)?	Immersion Biling./Part Biling. Foreign Lang.	9=10% 63=72% 14=16%	5=15% 20=63% 6=19%	4=7% 43=77% 8=14%	4=10% 30=73% 6=15%	5=12% 31=72% 6=14%	0 2=50% 2=50%
16	How should Lakota be taught in high school?	Immersion Bilingual Foreign Lang.	8=9% 38=43% 8=21%	5=15% 14=44% 6=19%	3=5% 24=43% 12=21%	6=15% 20=49% 5=12%	2=5% 16=37% 11=26%	0 2=50% 2=50%

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 3. Survey Results for Questions 1-16 by Age

		Age Groups							Ages of Children				
Item	Choices	20-	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	0-5	6-9	10-12	13-17	None
1	Agree	3 = 75%	23=92%	27=97%	20=100%	7=100%	3=100%	1=100%	24=94%	32=100%	33=100%	25=95%	22=96%
	Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Agree	3=75%	22=88%	26=93%	19=95%	6=86%	2=67%	1=100%	23=92%	30=94%	31=94%	23=92%	20=87%
	Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Agree	2=50%	19=76%	23=82%	18=90%	5=71%	3=100%	0	20=81%	29=91%	29=88%	31=84%	17=74%
	Disagree	0	2=8%	1=4%	0	0	0	1=100%	2=5%	0	1=3%	2=5%	1=4%
4	Agree	3=75%	21=84%	23=82%	18=90%	7=100%	3=100%	1=100%	21=88%	31=97%	31=94%	23=88%	20=87%
	Disagree	0	1=4%	2=7%	0	0	0	0	2=8%	0	1=3%	2=8%	0
5	Agree	3=75%	19=76%	24=83%	19=95%	7=100%	3=100%	0	20=84%	31=97%	31=94%	23=89%	18=78%
	Disagree	0	3=12%	1=3%	0	0	0	1=100%	3=8%	0	2=6%	2=8%	1=4%
6	Agree	3=75%	21=84%	24=83%	19=95%	7=100%	3=100%	1=100%	21=88%	31=97%	32=97%	23=88%	21=91%
	Disagree	0	4=16%	2=7%	0	0	0	0	4=11%	0	1=3%	3=8%	1=5%
7	Agree	2=50%	19=76%	23=82%	18=90%	6=86%	3=100%	1=100%	21=84%	29=88%	29=88%	29=78%	17=74%
	Disagree	1=25%	2=28%	2=11%	2=10%	1=14%	0	0	2=8%	2=6%	2=7%	6=16%	5=22%
8	Yes	0	1=4%	4=14%	4=20%	2=29%	1=33%	0	3=14%	4=14%	3=10%	8=21%	3=13%
	No	3=75%	11=44%	5=18%	3=15%	1=14%	0	1=100%	5=22%	6=12%	6=17%	4=11%	12=52%
9	Yes	1=25%	5=20%	14=50%	13=65%	5=71%	3=100%	1=100%	7=47%	17=52%	21=64%	20=54%	8=35%
	No	2=50%	6=24%	3=11%	1=5%	0	0	0	4=17%	5=16%	4=12%	2=5%	2=12%
10	Yes	0	4=16%	13=48%	12=60%	5=71%	2=67%	0	13=62%	15=47%	19=58%	20=54%	6=26%
	No	2=50%	13=52%	2=18%	2=10%	0	0	0	3=23%	9=28%	6=18%	6=16%	6=26%
11	Yes	0	3=12%	7=25%	9=45%	3=43%	2=67%	0	12=57%	10=31%	9=27%	11=30%	5=22%
	No	3=75%	14=56%	6=21%	2=10%	1=14%	1=33%	1=100%	4=19%	8=25%	7=21%	6=16%	10=43%
12	None	0	2=8%	2=7%	2=10%	0	0	1=100%	1=6%	0	2=6%	4=11%	2=9%
	1-12 Years	3=75%	17=68%	16=57%	15=75%	6=86%	2=67%	0	14=72%	24=74%	23=70%	13=62%	16=69%
	13 Yr-Life	1=25%	6=24%	10=36%	3=15%	1=14%	1=33%	0	7=26%	8=26%	8=24%	10=27%	5=22%
13	None	0	2=8%	2=7%	1=5%	0	0	0	1=6%	0	1=3%	3=8%	1=4%
	Birth to 5	4=100%	23=88%	25=89%	17=85%	7=100%	3=100%	1=100%	15=92%	32=100%	31=94%	31=84%	21=92%
	6+	0	1=4%	1=4%	2=10%	0	0	0	0	0	1=3%	3=8%	1=4%
14	American	1=25%	8=32%	11=39%	13=65%	3=43%	1=33%	0	13=62%	15=47%	16=48%	16=43%	10=43%
	Bilingual	2=50%	16=64%	15=54%	6=30%	4=57%	2=67%	1=100%	10=53%	17=53%	16=48%	18=49%	12=52%
	None	1=25%	0	2=7%	1=5%	0	0	0	1=5%	0	0	0	0
15	[illegible]	0	0	5=18%	2=10%	1=14%	1=33%	0	1=5%	4=13%	3=9%	3=8%	3=13%
	Bilng/Fmr.L.B.	2=50%	20=80%	17=61%	16=80%	5=72%	2=64%	1=100%	15=78%	25=78%	27=82%	26=70%	16=70%
	Foreign Lang.	1=25%	5=20%	5=18%	2=10%	1=14%	1=33%	0	3=16%	3=9%	3=9%	7=19%	3=13%
16	American	0	0	3=11%	3=15%	2=29%	0	0	2=8%	5=16%	3=9%	3=8%	2=9%
	Bilingual	1=25%	12=48%	11=39%	9=45%	5=71%	0	0	20=59%	17=53%	18=55%	19=51%	5=22%
	Foreign Lang.	1=25%	0	1=4%	0	0	0	0	8=22%	3=9%	5=15%	7=19%	7=30%

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Lakota and white homes. However, number five, "I would teach Lakota to my children to promote learning and understanding," received replies from all female Lakota household members between the ages of 20 and 60. The percentages of Lakota household members versus mixed household respondents were close for most other categories. Number four, *elderly*, received answers from a much higher percentage of Lakota household members than mixed household members, while number seven, *because it's important*, received a higher percentage of responses from mixed household members. Again, the category *other* was not considered because its low response rate distorted percentages.

Ages of respondents: Age groups 30 to 40 and 40 to 50 were represented consistently throughout all the categories. The answers of respondents younger than 20 fell only under the second category, *language equals culture*. None of the responses by 20 to 30 year olds could be catalogued under categories one (*to save language*), three (because *language is culture*), or four (*because home is best for teaching the language*). Thirty to 40 year olds gave a high number of responses under categories two and three. These items had partially different content, but the responses indicate that 30 year olds have an understanding of the fact that language is vital to culture and that home is an important language learning environment. This becomes more significant when considering that these 30 some year olds are the parent generation of pre-school and elementary age children, the very age group to be targeted by the pilot language program.

Question 18

Below is a chart showing the frequency distribution of choices for survey item 18:

"A teacher should have the following qualifications to teach language":

Lakota fluency	
26 responses (of the total 88)	
Literacy in Lakota	15 responses
Lakota fluency and teaching skills	13 responses
No response given	11 responses
Teaching degree and Lakota language	10 responses
Teaching degree	9 responses
Fluency and culture/ traditions	6 responses
Cultural knowledge/ traditions	3 responses
Be Indian and traditional values	3 responses
No specific qualifications mentioned	3 responses
Teaching skills	2 responses
Be a parent/ grandparent	2 responses
Teaching degree and be Lakota	1 response
Fullblood and good education	1 response
Fullblood with language and culture	1 response
Be elderly	1 response
Have commitment	1 response
Other	1 response

Totalling the answers that mention the same qualities, 56 community members (64% under subheadings 3, 4, 6, 7, and 11) considered fluency in the Lakota language the most important qualification to teach the Lakota language. Fifteen respondents (17% under categories 5 and 6) felt that teaching skills were necessary, while an additional 20 (23% under subheadings 1, 2, and 3) believed that a formal degree is needed. This adds up to 35 individuals (40%) who advocate the necessity of possessing either teaching skills or a formal degree to teach Lakota. Ten respondents (11%) considered knowledge of culture essential and a total of 12 people (14%) considered following traditions important. However, these two categories overlap because some individuals mentioned culture and traditions in the same answer. Six people (7%) felt that Lakota language teachers should be Indian, and 2 of them (2%) thought teachers need to be full-bloods.

Results suggest that Cheyenne River residents from the surveyed communities consider teaching skills coupled with fluency and literacy in the language the most important teaching qualifications for a Lakota language teacher.

Gender of respondents: There is some consistency when analyzing answers under each sub-category according to gender (for item 18). A higher percentage of females than males believed that a Lakota teacher should have a teaching degree: 29% of females versus 12% of males (combined from categories 1, 2, and 3). Nineteen percent of males and 19% of females mentioned teaching skills (as separate from teaching degree, combined from categories 5 and 6) as a necessary requirement. Those who felt that fluency in Lakota is crucial were predominantly male, except for under subheading 3. Under this subheading, the combination with *teaching degree* had more female respondents.

Findings suggest that females are more interested in a teacher having a formal degree than males and that they are slightly more interested in a teacher having teaching skills over other qualities. Also, more females than males (combined from categories 2, 9, 10, and 11), 10% versus 6%, felt that being Indian, Lakota, or a full-blood should be a prerequisite to becoming a Lakota language teacher. Yet the 3% of individuals who mentioned being a full-blood were male versus the 2% of females. Those respondents who selected language skills as the most desirable qualification were predominantly male: 68% versus 61%. There was an equal distribution of respondents who felt that traditional or cultural practices are important in the lives of language teachers—12% males compared to 12% females.

Household composition: As for gender, a slight pattern was noted when comparing the ethnic composition of respondents' households and respondents' answers to question 18. More members of Lakota households (29%) than of mixed Lakota/non-Lakota households (19%, combined from categories 1, 2, and 3) believed that a teaching degree would be necessary to teach the language. In contrast, 23% of mixed household members (combined responses from categories 5 and 6) specifically mentioned teaching skills as necessary versus only 9% from Lakota households.

The same tendency held true for the respondents who included knowledge of the Lakota language as a crucial qualification. Sixty-six percent (combined

from categories 3, 4, 6, 7, and 11) were from mixed households versus 60% from Lakota households. It may be that Lakota household members take knowledge of Lakota more as a given characteristic that a Lakota language teacher would possess. Fifteen respondents specifically mentioned literacy skills in the Lakota language (category 18). Nineteen percent of all mixed household members and 17% of all Lakota household members found Lakota literacy crucial to teach the language. This result needs to be viewed with caution because many respondents who mentioned proficiency or complete knowledge of Lakota may have included literacy in their thought.

Eighteen percent of respondents (combined from categories 7, 8, 9, and 11) who believed that knowledge of culture and practice of traditions should be characteristic of teachers were from Lakota households, while 10% were from mixed households. Eleven percent of Lakota household members (combined from categories 2, 9, 10, and 11) felt that a teacher of the language should be Indian compared to only 2% from mixed households. Of these, one person from a Lakota household and one from a mixed household thought that a teacher should be full-blood. One individual in each group thought that teachers should be parents or grandparents themselves.

These findings suggest that Lakota household members believed more adamantly that teachers should have formal education with a degree, that they should be Indian or full-blood (9% versus 2% from mixed households), and that they should follow their culture and traditions. In contrast, community members residing in households made up of a mixture of Lakota and non-Lakota on the average found it more important than respondents from Lakota households that language instructors demonstrate adequate teaching skills, that they be literate in the language, and that they be fluent Lakota language speakers.

Ages of respondents: No consistent pattern was noted when linking age to type of response because the highest percentage of answers was evenly distributed for 20 to 50 year olds for all subheadings, one through 18. Yet only 40 to 50 year olds mentioned *Lakota fluency and teaching skills*, to be *elderly*, and to be a *parent or grandparent* in their responses. *Lakota fluency* and *Lakota fluency and teaching skills* as teacher qualifications were desired by a significantly higher percentage of 40 to 50 year olds than by the other age groups. Hence, 40 to 50 year olds dominated in their wish for a teaching degree or teaching skills and Lakota fluency. Twenty to 30 year olds were the only age group that listed *teaching skills*, *be a full-blood with a good education*, and have *commitment* as their requirements for a language teacher.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The majority of positive answers indicated respondent agreement with the establishment of intensified Lakota language education for all school levels on the Cheyenne River Reservation, both by quality and duration. It is fortunate that the majority of respondents who agreed with expanded Lakota language education at all school levels were 40 to 50 year olds with children between the early elementary and middle school level—precisely the age group that holds

most of the key office positions with decision making power within the structure of tribal government. At the same time, it is unfortunate that people around their 30s, and especially the youth, do not think more highly of language revitalization issues, possibly not recognizing their urgency.

Survey respondents indicated a slight preference for bilingual education as compared to immersion programs. Research suggests, however, that complete exposure to a language, as is only possible in immersion classrooms, results in the quickest and most complete language learning in young children (Wilson & Kamana, 1996; Yamauchi & Ceppi, 1998). Therefore, I suggest that more information sessions are needed to inform the general public of these findings and to assure increasing support for immersion programs. As the second choice of all surveyed community members, immersion still received enough positive responses to make the initiation of a pilot project in Head Start and the lower elementary level a likely success at this time.

For the upper elementary, middle school, and high school level, survey results, supported by second language acquisition research (Saville-Troike, 1981), suggest that a program teaching Lakota for a set number of hours per week would receive enough student enrolment to be justified. It needs to be mentioned that a number of respondents also suggested partial immersion and bilingual education in high school. However, second language acquisition studies support a more structured program for older students (Saville-Troike, 1981).

To revernacularize Lakota, drastic changes are necessary. As Joshua Fishman has explained repeatedly, this requires a tremendous amount of self discipline to be exercised by every community member. English has to be made inaccessible in certain contexts. Ideally, there should be whole buildings and events where only Lakota can and will be spoken. People should voluntarily ban television and other forms of modern media entertainment from their homes, at least for certain hours or within certain contexts. Additional steps should include immersion youth camps, public advertising on billboards in Lakota, announcement boards in office buildings, street signs, storefront signs, local radio stations, newspaper(s), and local Public Access TV in Lakota. Store clerks and office personnel should greet their clients in Lakota. And, finally, Lakota immersion needs to gain public support and to be implemented in the schools.

Notes

[1] Bear Creek, Blackfoot, Bridger, Cherry Creek, Dupree, Eagle Butte, Firesteel, Glad Valley, Glencross, Green Grass, Iron Lightning, Isabel, Lantry, LaPlant, On the Trees, Parade, Promise, Red Elm, Red Scaffold, Ridgeview, Swift Bird, Timber Lake, Thunder Butte, Trail City, White Horse.

References

Fishman, J. (1991). *Reversing language shift. Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. (1996a). What do you lose when you lose your language? In G. Cantoni (Ed.), *Stabilizing indigenous languages* (pp.80-91). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University. http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/miscpubs/stabilize/iii-families/lose.htm

Fishman, J. (1996b). Maintaining languages: What works what doesn't? Conclusion. In G. Cantoni (Ed.), *Stabilizing indigenous languages* (pp. 186-198). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University. http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/miscpubs/stabilize/conclusion.htm

Saville-Troike, M. (1981). The development of bilingual and bicultural competence in children. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education*. Available on microfiche ED 206 376.

Saville-Troike, M. (1988). Private Speech: Evidence for second language learning strategies during the silent period. *Journal of Child Language, 15*(3), 567-590.

Wilson W. H., & Kamana, K. (1996). Hawaiian language programs. In G. Cantoni (Ed.), *Stabilizing Indigenous languages* (pp. 153-156). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University. http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/miscpubs/stabilize/additional/hawaiian.htm

Yamauchi, L. A., & Ceppi, A. K. (1998). A review of indigenous language immersion programs and a focus on Hawai'i. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 31*(1), 11-21.

Appendix

Lakota Language Survey

I have children in the following age group(s)
__ 3-5 __ 6-9 __ 10-12 __ 13-17 __ none in these age groups

Please read the following items carefully and rate them on a 5- point scale as indicated by circling the number of the best response. Example: if you strongly agree - circle 1, if you agree - circle 2, undcided - circle 3, disagree - circle 4, and strongly disagree - circle 4. Please reply to all the items.

1. Children should learn how to speak and understand Lakota.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Children should learn how to read and write Lakota.	1 2 3 4 5
3. If there was an immersion classroom offered, I would enroll my child.	1 2 3 4 5
4. There should be a Lakota immersion Head Start group.	1 2 3 4 5
5. There should be a Lakota immersion project in the elementary school(s).	1 2 3 4 5
6. I wish Lakota came back as an everyday spoken language.	
7. A Lakota person able to speak Lakota has more of a cultural identity than a Lakota who only speaks English.	1 2 3 4 5

For the following items, please circle 1 for completely, 2 for a lot, 3 for to some, 4 for a little, and 5 for not at all.

8. I am teaching Lakota to my children at home.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I can understand Lakota.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I can speak Lakota.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I can read and write Lakota.	1 2 3 4 5

For the next items, please check only one choice per question.

12. If you believe there should be immersion, how many years should it continue?
    __ There should be no immersion
    __ Immersion should be taught for ___ years.
13. At what age should immersion instruction begin? Age: _____
    __ There should be no immersion instruction
14. How should Lakota be taught in Head Start?
    __ All interaction should occur in Lakota (Immersion)
    __ Lakota and English should both be used in the classroom (Bilingual Education)
    __ Lakota should not be taught in Head Start
    __ Other

15. How should Lakota be taught in the elementary school(s)?
__ All subjects (math, language arts, etc.) should be taught in Lakota (Immersion)
__ Classes should be taught using Lakota and English (Bilingual)
__ Early grades should be taught all in Lakota, in higher grades some classes should be taught in English, some in Lakota
__ Lakota should be taught as a subject so many times a week, as you would a foreign language
__ Lakota should not be taught in the elementary school(s)
__ Other

_____

16. How should Lakota be taught in high school?
__ All subjects should be taught in Lakota (Immersion)
__ Some classes/subjects should be taught in Lakota, the others in English
__ At least some classes should be taught using both Lakota and English as the language of instruction (Bilingual)
__ Lakota should be taught as a subject, as you would a foreign language
__ Lakota should not be taught in High School
__ Other

_____

17. At home, would you help teach Lakota to your child to support language teaching efforts by the school(s)? Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____

18. What qualifications should a teacher have to teach Lakota language?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What is your household composition?
__ Lakota __ white __ mixed __ other

Please indicate your age group?
__ Younger than 20 __ 20-30 __ 30-40 __ 40-50 __ 50-60
__ 60-70 __ Over 70

I am __ male __ female

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR RESPONSE